

24 June 1966

DCI's REMARKS TO
ARMED FORCES STAFF COLLEGE
GRADUATION CEREMONIES

I propose to borrow, shamelessly, one of the most useful opening lines of this year's crop of graduation speeches. It was used at the baccalaureate service of one of the high schools near Washington a couple of weeks ago, and before that by Joshua when things were going badly before the walls of Jericho.

The priest who was giving the main address looked at the audience, then looked heavenward, and intoned:

" O Lord, what shall I say?"

The padre went on to explain that he found this a particularly useful invocation for graduation exercises because he had rarely run into any adults who could remember anything that was said in the baccalaureate or commencement addresses of their youth.

Now, there is a corollary that goes along with this observation, which I am going to take for my guidance in these remarks: we may not remember the contents of our high school graduation addresses, but we rarely forget how long they were.

I know the old maxim of one of our finer services that somebody always fails to get the word, and I assure you that I get the message loud and clear.

My main purpose today is to congratulate you-- both on your original selection for this course, and on your completion of it. I am a firm believer in our use of the senior service schools as a selection process to make the best even better.

It seems to me that these exercises here today differ significantly from most of the graduation ceremonies that take place by the thousands all over the country every June.

For one thing, this graduation is not your first. You are not a bunch of unknown quantities, about to be launched sink-or-swim into the world. All of you have been tempered, tried and proven in your field, or you would not be here.

By the same token, graduation in your case does not mark an end to education. You have learned, since your first graduation, that education is a continuing process. One of the abundances of this century is an abundance of knowledge--we will never run out of things we need to learn. We have even had to create machines to store and retrieve information for us, because man can no longer absorb the totality of our knowledge in one lifetime.

Thirdly, of course, you are in a far better position than the new high school and college graduates to appreciate the use of the term "Commencement"--the beginning of confrontations with new responsibilities and new problems, armed with new talents and new outlooks.

One of these fresh outlooks, I hope, is that the probing, demanding human mind has not returned to the classroom and the library in its maturity just to be given answers to memorize, as a machine might store them. In this day and age, it is even more important to our future that we seek out the questions, particularly those for which there are as yet no answers. There may have been greater wisdom than we realize in the discovery which has now been revealed to you, that the first and foremost step in the preparation of a staff study is to find out what the problem is.

There is an anecdote to the effect that Napoleon made it a practice to stack up all of his incoming mail unopened for 30 days, because he had discovered that with the passage of time, most of the mail would no longer require an answer after 30 days; the problem had either disappeared, or solved itself. Today, however, our world is one of challenge and rivalry, where problems are not likely to disappear by themselves if we just ignore them.

The problems are going to be solved, either by us, or on the other fellow's terms.

Now, in regard to that "other fellow:"-----

The Russian Communists have been keeping our experts on so-called "Soviet-ology" working overtime ever since Stalin died, with their leadership changes and shifts and zigzags, but one thing remains clear: the Soviet Union may have changed its style and its tactics, but never its long-range objectives. Communism today remains a dynamic and aggressive creed in which so-called "co-existence" is only a temporizing tactic, not a definitive solution. The ultimate objective is still world Communism, and the destruction of those who resist it.

As for China, whatever change of style there may have been recently has been for the worse. Mao Tse-tung keeps charging that the Soviets are soft on imperialism, and his potential successors are just as hard-nosed, or more so.

Regardless of the Sino-Soviet dispute; regardless of the many explanations given for Khrushchev's famous remark, "we will bury you"---and the zig-zag course since that time of U.S.-Soviet relations, we must keep in mind that these two large and powerful Communist nations probably agree on one thing: that they do want to "bury" the United States and the entire Western free world.

The differences between them boil down essentially to questions of when and how they should best do this.

Now, one of the first and best rules of self-defense is to know your enemy. We must---for our own security--- know everything we can about the Soviet Union and the Communist Chinese.

This is an extremely difficult task. Communist countries are closed societies----police states, where a man may not change his address, or draw his ration coupons, without the knowledge of the security authorities; where even in his own home, perhaps within the circle of his own immediate family, a man is not safe from informers and surveillance of every kind. It is not a healthy environment for classical espionage. When, in the case of China, you add to this police state the racial barriers, it would be easy to say that James Bond and his illustrious fellow spies of fiction wouldn't have a "Chinaman's chance," except that it is no joking matter.

To do the job, we have got to use the best analysis, the best methods, the best technologies that our Twentieth Century world can provide today, but even more essentially, the best that we are going to be able to provide tomorrow.

Both in the science of intelligence and in military science, the defense is prone to catch up with the offense. We pried open Russia's closed society to a

degree in 1956 with the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft. By 1957, a year later, the Soviets were beginning to deploy a surface-to-air missile system capable of shooting it down. Today one of the weapons which looms largest in military science is the intercontinental ballistic missile. Tomorrow it may well be the anti-missile missile.

As long as science and technology maintain this rapid point and counterpoint of scientific breakthrough and offsetting countermeasures, we are forced, in both the military and intelligence, to learn to plan for innovation, plan for change. We must be planning, in other words, not only for the best application of the assets, the methods, and the technologies we have today, but for the ones we are going to have in the future. And this brings me back to what I said about the questions which can be just as important as the answers. We should be planning, not just for the use of what is still on the drawing boards today, but for the application of ideas which at present have not even reached the drawing boards.

At the Central Intelligence Agency, for instance, we are projecting our plans and programs five, ten, and even 15 years into the future. We postulate our requirements in terms of the target dates, long before we have the assets to meet them. Then we can work backward from the goals and put our best thinkers to work coming up with the necessary tools to do the job.

In effect, we have added to the catchphrase about "daring to think the unthinkable" a new one: undertaking to "plan the unplannable."

As many of you know, the intelligence profession in reality is a far cry from its fiction. We have very few James Bonds in the headquarters building at Langley, but we do have enough expert scholars, both in the humanities and the sciences, to staff the faculty of a great university: economists, scientists, historians, statisticians, all bringing their vast knowledge and keen minds to bear on the problems relating to the national security of the United States. These men are engaged in searching out both today's answers and tomorrow's questions.

As a nation, we face a challenge, not only to learn to cope with our enemies, but to learn to cope with a future which is difficult to foresee. We are fore-armed if we have started by speculating on the nature of some of the challenges which may confront us.

As for today, let me finish by thanking you for the privilege of addressing you on this occasion, congratulating you on your graduation, and wishing you well in your future assignments.